

Message Text

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ORIGIN NEA-16

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S/S - MR. LUERS

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY RABAT

INFO USINT ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY MADRID

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 175338

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MO, SP, SS

SUBJECT: LARAKI DEMARCHE ON SPANISH SAHARA

1. FOLLOWING LUNCHEON HOSTED BY DEP. SEC. INGERSOLL, FOREIGN MINISTER LARAKI AND AMBASSADOR SENOUSSE MET WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY FOR WORKING SESSION ON AUGUST 6. LARAKI BEGAN MEETING BY REVIEWING HISTORY OF EUROPEAN COLONIZATION IN NORTH AFRICA, EMPHASIZING FACT THAT MOROCCAN GOVERNMENT HAD ALWAYS PUBLISHED RESERVATIONS ON BORDERS AS PART OF AGREEMENTS WITH FRANCE AND SPAIN. LARAKI THEN MADE LOW-KEY PRESENTATION CONCERNING HISTORIC MOROCCAN CLAIMS TO SPANISH SAHARA. HE WAS QUITE FIRM IN RULING OUT ANY CONSIDERATIONS OF ALGERIAN INTEREST IN THE SAHARA, ARGUING THAT ALGERIANS HAD NOT MADE ANY BORDER
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RESERVATIONS AT TIME THEY HAD GAINED INDEPENDENCE

FROM FRANCE AND HAD COMMITTED THEMSELVES TO EXISTING BORDERS WHEN THEY REACHED UNDERSTANDING WITH MOROCCO ON ALGERIAN-MOROCCAN BORDER. HE ADMITTED THAT THERE MIGHT BE A BORDER PROBLEM BETWEEN MOROCCO AND MAURITANIA, BUT SAID THAT ALL THE HISTORICAL, JURIDICAL AND POLITICAL FACTORS FAVORED MOROCCO.

2. THROUGHOUT PRESENTATION, LARAKI EMPHASIZED MOROCCAN DESIRE TO NEGOTIATE SOLUTION AND TO AVOID CREATING NEW TENSION IN THE AREA. HE SUGGESTED THAT USG MIGHT BE ABLE TO EXERT INFLUENCE IN MADRID FOR A PEACEFUL NEGOTIATED SETTLEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND EMPHASIZED THAT SPANISH ECONOMIC AND MILITARY INTERESTS IN THE SPANISH SAHARA COULD BE PROTECTED BY JOINT EXPLOITATION OF THE SAHARA'S PHOSPHATE DEPOSITS AND BY THE GRANTING OF MILITARY BASE RIGHTS IN THE SAHARA TO SPAIN.

3. LARAKI SAID THAT SPAIN NOW SEEMED WILLING TO NEGOTIATE. HE MENTIONED FRANCO'S LETTER TO HASSAN AND SAID THAT HE HAD JUST RECEIVED A REPORT THAT THE SPANISH COUNCIL OF MINISTERS WOULD MEET ON AUGUST 8 UNDER PRINCE CARLOS, FOLLOWING WHICH HE EXPECTED THAT AN INVITATION WOULD BE SENT BY THE SPANISH GOVERNMENT TO THE MOROCCAN PRIME MINISTER ASKING HIM TO COME TO MADRID FOR THE PURPOSE OF NEGOTIATING THE SAHARAN ISSUE.

4. LARAKI REAFFIRMED THE MOROCCAN ACCEPTANCE OF THE UN RESOLUTION OF 1966 WHICH PROVIDED FOR A REFERENDUM OF THE INHABITANTS OF SPANISH SAHARA. HE SAID THAT MOROCCO HAD VOTED FOR THE RESOLUTIONS ON THREE CONDITIONS: 1) THE WITHDRAWAL OF SPANISH TROOPS, 2) THE RETURN OF THE SAHARAN REFUGEES FROM MOROCCO TO VOTE, AND 3) INTERNATIONAL SUPERVISION OF THE ELECTION.

5. DEPUTY SECRETARY REITERATED USG DESIRE FOR A PEACEFUL NEGOTIATED SOLUTION TO THE CONFLICT AND ASKED IF SOME OTHER ARAB STATES WHO HAVE GOOD TIES WITH BOTH SPAIN AND MOROCCO COULD PLAY A USEFUL ROLE IN
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MEDIATING THE ISSUE. LARAKI REPLIED THAT HE SAW NO PARTICULAR NEED FOR MEDIATION SINCE SPAIN AND MOROCCO HAD MANY CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION WHICH COULD BE USED FOR THIS PURPOSE.

6. MEETING WAS AMICABLE AND LARAKI OBVIOUSLY USING SOFT-SELL.

7. LARAKI MEETING WITH SECRETARY REPORTED SEPTEL.

8. FULL MEMCONS FOLLOW BY POUCH. KISSINGER

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